

A New Military Strategic Communications System

**A Monograph
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14. ABSTRACT

The United States government and the US military are struggling with strategic communications. To succeed the USG must improve its ability to understand the social context and cultural characteristics of the population, identify target audiences from a population, and engage the target audience through unified action. The *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications* and the Department of Defense, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* both concluded that the US military must organize supporting communications capabilities better to provide a coherent message through unified action synchronized with operations. The current Department of Defense solutions to military strategic communications do not address the entire scope of the strategic communications problem. Consequently, the messages are still ineffective and not synchronized with other military actions to mass effects on the battlefield.

To remedy this situation, the US military needs a more effective planning process and organizational structure to help commanders focus their military strategic communications planning efforts at the operational and tactical level. Achieving success in strategic communications requires an agile, adaptable, and scalable planning process that provides a commander a framework to synchronize message and action in their area of operations. Political campaigning was one resource identified by the Department of Defense Science Board. Applying the political campaign planning process to military strategic communications suggests such a framework.

The framework presented at the conclusion of this paper was derived from an assessment of the current shortfalls in the strategic communications system and a comparison of that system with political campaign processes. The framework provides a foundation from which to alter current military doctrine.

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Abstract

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The United States government and the US military are struggling with strategic communications. To succeed the USG must improve its ability to understand the social context and cultural characteristics of the population, identify target audiences from a population, and engage the target audience through unified action. The *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications* and the Department of Defense, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* both concluded that the US military must organize supporting communications capabilities better to provide a coherent message through unified action synchronized with operations. The current Department of Defense solutions to military strategic communications do not address the entire scope of the strategic communications problem. Consequently, the messages are still ineffective and not synchronized with other military actions to mass effects on the battlefield.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Assessment of the Military Strategic Communications System.....	9
Organizational Gaps and Doctrinal Holes	11
Inadequate Planning Process	15
Assessment of the Political Campaign System.....	25
Target Audience Analysis	29
Target the Voters	33
Message Development.....	36
Coordinated Action	42
A New Military Strategic Communications System	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY	56

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Horizontal and Organizational Gaps in Military Strategic Communications	15
Figure 2 - Conventional Targeting Process	20
Figure 3 Political Campaign Organization	26
Figure 4 Political Campaign Attitudinal Research	35
Figure 5 - Principles of Information Comparison	37
Figure 6 - Political Campaign Issue Importance Selection Box.....	38
Figure 7 - The Political Campaign Message Box.....	40
Figure 8 New Military Strategic Communications Organization Structure	48
Figure 9 New Military Strategic Communications Planning Process	51
Figure 10 Human Factor Analysis.....	52
Figure 11 Target Audience Identification	53
Figure 12 Develop Theme and Messages.....	54
Figure 13 Develop target Audience Contact Plan	55

INTRODUCTION

The United States government (USG) and the US military are struggling with strategic communications. To succeed the USG must improve its ability to understand social context and cultural characteristics of the population, identify target audiences from a population, and engage the target audience through unified action. Strategic communications is a communications process designed to coordinate information, themes, plans, programs, and actions in concert with other elements of national power. The goal is to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to the achievement of US national interests. The US military needs a more effective planning process and organizational structure to achieve the military strategic communications goal.

The *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications*¹ concluded that the US military must organize better supporting communications capabilities to provide a coherent message through unified action synchronized with operations. The Department of Defense, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, dated September 2004, reached a similar conclusion.²

Based on extensive interaction and discussion the Task Force concludes that US strategic communication must be transformed. We are engaged in a global struggle of ideas similar in magnitude to what we faced throughout half of the twentieth century. Succeeding in this struggle requires leadership from the President on down. The US has tremendous communications capability in all the various private sector media and academic communities. The Task Force believes these resources can be leveraged while maintaining independent analysis and thought.³

Political campaigning was one resource identified in the private sector that could help transform strategic communications. The Defense Science Board went on to recommend seven

¹ *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications*. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense. Washington, DC 2006. 3.

² *Report of the Defense Science Board Task on Strategic Communications*. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. Washington, DC: 2004.50.

³ Vitto, Vincent. Task Force Chairmen. *Report of the Defense Science Board Task on Strategic Communications*. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. Washington, DC: 2004. Introduction.

revolutionary changes in the United States Government's processes for conducting Strategic Communications. These revolutionary changes affected the Department of State and the Department of Defense. However, the current USG solutions to strategic communications do not address the entire scope of the strategic communications problem.

The transformation of the Department of State started when President Bush tasked Ms. Karen Hughes, a long time, experienced political campaign consultant and the President's campaign media manager, to promote America's values and confront terrorism around the world. President Bush designated Ms. Karen Hughes the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Her charge is to oversee three bureaus at the Department of State: Educational and Cultural Affairs, Public Affairs, and International Information Programs, and to participate in foreign policy development at the State Department. In addition, Ms. Hughes chairs the National Security Council's Policy Coordinating Committee for Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy. The NSC Policy Coordinating Committee for Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy's coordinates strategic communications themes and messages for the President. Ms Karen Hughes is effectively the Director for Strategic Communications for the USG.⁴ The Department of State leads the interagency in disseminating the President's strategic communications message. The military supports diplomatic and informational elements of national power via Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD).⁵

The Department of Defense (DOD) continues to transform its strategic communications process at the national level. The DOD strategic communications transformation started with the findings and recommendations of the *Task Force on Strategic Communications Report*. The report recommended that the DOD restructure its offices to facilitate the coordination of all components of strategic communications including public diplomacy, public affairs, international

⁴ *Karen Hughes Biography*, Undersecretary, Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, US Department of State; <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/53692.htm>.

⁵ Josten, Richard J. "Strategic Communication: Key Enabler for Elements of National Power." *Information Operations Center IO Sphere* (Summer 2006): 18.

broadcasting, and military information operations and ensure that all military plans and operations have appropriate strategic communication components. The DOD transformation of strategic communications further detailed in the *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)* and implemented by guidance published in the *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communications* provides guidance for the US military.

The QDR Strategic Communications Roadmap contains instructions for implementing strategic communications proposals in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and includes; “A plan of action and milestones (POA&M) which assigns objectives, tasks, and milestones, with associated Offices of Primary Responsibility (OPR). The roadmap also provides an initial estimate of the costs of improving capabilities that support Strategic Communications.”⁶ The changes focus on improving strategic communications in the DOD and address military strategic communications from DOD down to the Regional Combatant Commander (RCC) level. The QDR also identified significant gaps in the primary communication supporting capabilities.

Public Affairs (PA); aspects of Information Operations (IO), principally Psychological Operations (PSYOP); Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD); and during the development of this roadmap, Visual Information (VI), principally Combat Camera (COMCAM), was also identified as a primary communications supporting capability. The DOD must properly organize, train, equip, and resource these primary communication supporting capabilities.⁷

Consequently, the objective of the QDR Roadmap for Strategic Communications is threefold: first, the QDR Roadmap institutionalizes a DOD process to synchronize military strategic communications in the development of strategy, policy formulation, planning, and execution. Next, the QDR Roadmap seeks to define roles, responsibilities and relationships. Finally, the QDR Roadmap seeks to develop doctrine for military strategic communications and its primary communication supporting capabilities. Unfortunately, the QDR Strategic Communications

⁶ *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications*. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense. Washington, DC 2006. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*,3.

Roadmap implements changes at the strategic level without addressing military strategic communications at the operational and tactical level.

Figure 1 shows the difference from Strategic communications and Military Strategic Communications. Strategic communications uses all elements of national power. Military strategic communications uses the message of Public Affairs, Information Operations, Combat Camera, and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy coordinated with military operations.

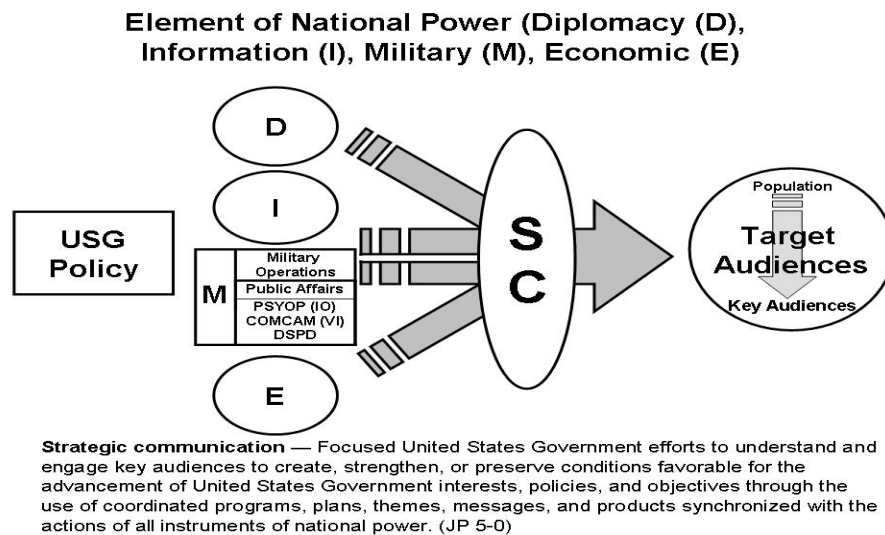


Figure 1 Strategic Communications versus Military Strategic Communications

The current Defense Department solutions to military strategic communications do not address the entire scope of the strategic communications problem. Consequently, the messages are still ineffective and not synchronized with other military actions to mass effects on the battlefield. For example, after Operation VIGILENT RESOLVE in the spring of 2004, LTG Thomas F. Metz observed; “We are not consistently achieving synergy and mass in our strategic communications from the strategic to the tactical level.”⁸ As LTG Metz’s observation illustrates, problems in military strategic communications exist also at the operational and tactical level.

Tactical actions can have strategic consequences because the Global Information Environment

⁸ LTG Thomas F. Metz, LTC Mark W. Garret, LTC James E. Hutton, and LTC Timothy Bush. “*Massing Effects in the Information Domain – A Case Study in Aggressive Information Operations.*” *Military Review* (May-June 2006): 4.

(GIE) broadcasts minor events worldwide. The tactical action at Abu-Ghraib prison had severe strategic consequences for the military and the USG. Tactical commanders often act like provincial governors and city mayors in their areas of operation. Commanders routinely communicate with the local military and police forces and with the general populace. Their messages must be consistent with the strategic communications themes and the USG goals. Regrettably, military strategic communications does not yet have a body of doctrine nor do the current ad-hoc processes ensure effective planning and execution. In addition, what doctrine does exist does not allow effective integration of the primary communications supporting capabilities identified by the *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications*. Furthermore, the military planning processes rarely synchronize the military strategic communications *message* with the action of military operations. At tactical and operational headquarters, military strategic communications is usually an afterthought or planned separately. Current military planning processes do not facilitate synchronized planning with military strategic communications and military operations. Often, military strategic communications are confused with Information Operations or Public Affairs. The current Defense Department solutions to military strategic communications simply do not address the entire scope of the strategic communications problem. To remedy this situation, the US military needs a more effective planning process and organizational structure to help commanders focus their military strategic communications efforts at the operational and tactical level.

Simply put, the proposals made by the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and the QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communications do not go far enough. The US Military requires additional changes to address the problem of military strategic communications at the tactical and operational level. The commanders at the tactical and operational level must have the proper military strategic communications resources and processes to understand the social context and cultural characteristics of a population before identifying and engaging target audiences. To achieve the

goal of strategic communication, commanders must use the communications capabilities that support strategic communications to project a coherent message that reinforces other action taken by the command. The message and the actions require synchronization during military planning. The political campaign process accomplishes these tasks for a political campaign. That same political campaign process can also serve as a guide toward developing a framework with which to formulate changes to the existing military strategic communications system. The purpose of this research is to access the military strategic communications system and using the political campaign process, identify the processes and organization needed to correct the military strategic communications deficiencies.

Political campaign planning and military strategic communications are communications processes with similar goals. Each seeks to achieve changes in behavior by influencing cognitive processes. The political campaign planning process has established methods for researching and understanding the population, for identifying the target audiences within the population, and for engaging the key audiences with credible messages to influence and inform. Political campaigning provides a framework with which to assign roles, responsibilities, and relationships in a unified effort to ensure coherent credible messages. Thus, the political campaign planning process may provide the means to define processes and associated structure that can synchronize military strategic communications from the national to the tactical level.

Improving the US military's ability to plan and execute military strategic communications requires recognition that the problem consists of several interrelated dimensions. Simply put, commanders must first identify the target audiences by understanding the social content and cultural characteristics of the population. The foundation of military strategic communications planning is analysis of the target audience. The target audience requires segmenting by geographical location, demographic make up, and attitudinal research within the commander's area of operations. Then, a coherent and credible message requires designing for specific groups. The message can then be persuasive and important to the target audience.

Message and action synchronization cannot occur without first identifying the target audiences and then creating a coherent message that supports the commander's plan of action. Comparing the political campaign planning process with military strategic communications reveals how the political campaign process selects the target audience first and builds a plan of action and communication campaign afterwards, which is contrary to current military practice.

The problem is how to reach local audiences within the commander's area of operations and international audiences with potentially different messages without compromising the message to either audience while maintaining truth, trust, and transparency. Current military doctrine and some organizational issues stand as obstacles to efforts to integrate military strategic communications capabilities. Some of the obstacles are regulatory policies, statutory limitations, or resources deficiencies. In contrast, the political campaign staff organization and the national campaign party structure provide an organizational model facilitate promulgation of a coherent message through unified action.

Achieving success in strategic communications requires an agile, adaptable, and scalable planning process that provides a commander a framework to synchronize message and action in their area of operations. Applying the political campaign planning process to military strategic communications suggests such a framework. Political campaign planning begins by sorting the voter population to identify the campaign's target audience. The political communications campaign creates a plan to appeal to those audiences. This is the key difference between current military practices and political campaigning. However, to reach this conclusion requires an assessment of the current military strategic communications system.

Assessment of the Military Strategic Communications System

The assessment of the military strategic communications system answers the following question. Is the current military strategic communications system adequate? The answer is no. The military strategic communications doctrine, organizational structure, and planning process are inadequate. Military strategic communications has no doctrine. In the US Military, doctrine must form the cornerstone for all Joint operations; including the use of military strategic communications.⁹ The *Quadrennial Defense Review* does not go far enough to address doctrine and organizational issues because it only addresses changes from the DOD down to the Regional Combatant Commander (RCC) level. It does not address the operational and tactical level. The horizontal organizational issues are apparent by the informal separation in doctrine of IO and PA and the formal separation directed by the Chairman Joint Chiefs Staff (CJCS). Thus, the horizontal separation causes issues by excessive specialization of the staff processes within Public Affairs, Information Operations, and Psychological Operations. Then, this leads to gaps in coordination and planning. Organizational gaps and shortages in guidance produce an inadequate military strategic communications planning process. The first step in assessing the problem starts with defining the military strategic communications system.

The strategic communications system focuses the United States Government efforts to understand and engage target audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests. The system develops themes, messages, and programs synchronized with all instruments of national power.¹⁰ Military strategic communications is a subset of strategic communications. Military strategic communications is a communications process that seeks to gain popular support for the USG policy's and military actions. Like the strategic communications system, the military strategic communications process

⁹ *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications*. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense. Washington, DC 2006. 6.

¹⁰ Joint Publication 1-02. *Department of Defense Military and Associated Terms*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2001 (Amended Through 1 March 2007), 511.

uses its message and military actions to persuade the targeted population.¹¹ The military uses messages to persuade the targeted population to comply with instructions, to conform to new patterns of behavior, or to support a new government program. The message seeks to use cognitive processes to influence behavior.¹² The term military strategic communications action refers to all military actions that demonstrate by deeds the statements made in strategic communications messages. Since deeds speak louder than words, military actions that can be understood as contradicting the strategic message must be avoided.

In addressing military strategic communications, the QDR defined primary communications supporting capabilities. Public Affairs (PA), elements of Information Operations (IO), Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD), and Combat Camera (COMCAM) were named supporting capabilities.¹³ However, the term supporting capabilities does not accurately describe the list. Public Affairs are a military activity providing command and public information and promoting community relations. Information Operations and Public Affairs are often confused with military strategic communications. Rear Admiral Frank Thorp, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Joint Communication) testified before a House Armed Services subcommittee that the DOD had labored over the definition of Strategic Communications.¹⁴ He said,

We spent considerable amount of effort defining what we mean by Strategic Communication. First, I would like to explain what we think it is not. It is not Information Operations. It is not “themes and messages”...It is often also confused with media relations. Strategic Communication is not media relations. That is the responsibility of public affairs. We are working very hard to ensure all

¹¹ Josten, 17.

¹² Joint Publication 3-0. *Joint Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2006, I-11.

¹³ *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications*. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense. Washington, DC 2006, 2-3.

¹⁴ U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, *Strategic Communication in the Global War on Terrorism*, Wednesday, July 19, 2006, 5.

organizations in the Department are aware of this definition so that we can move forward together.¹⁵

Rear Admiral Thorp comments addressed the misconception that strategic communications is all Information Operations or media relations. However, his remarks do not clarify a conflict of roles and responsibilities of PA and IO when they support military strategic communications.

Unfortunately, defining military strategic communications is not enough. Doctrine is needed to establish clear procedures for implementing a strategic communications program.

Organizational Gaps and Doctrinal Shortfalls

The *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications* attempted to address the organizational gaps and doctrinal shortfall in the strategic communications field. However, the *Quadrennial Defense Review's* three objectives address the strategic level and fail to incorporate military strategic communications at the operational and tactical level. The QDR objectives are institutionalize a strategic communications process in DOD; define roles, responsibilities and relationships, develop doctrine; and resource, organize, train, and equip the military strategic communications process. Absent a doctrine to link strategic communications to actions at the operational and tactical level, it is impossible to develop the organization needed to achieve strategic communications success.¹⁶

Joint doctrine separates the functions of PA and IO in the headquarters. Doctrinally, IO and PSYOP functions align with operations within a headquarters (J39). IO and PSYOP plan operations to influence foreign audiences to change the behavior of a target audience. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the commander's objectives.¹⁷ Public Affairs is an independent staff section that

¹⁵ U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, *Strategic Communication in the Global War on Terrorism*, Wednesday, July 19, 2006, 5.

¹⁶ *Quadrennial Defense Review Roadmap for Strategic Communications*. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense. Washington, DC 2006, 4-8.

¹⁷ Joint Publication 3-13. *Information Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2006.

reports directly to the commander. Public Affairs provide factual timely information from the command to internal and external audiences including the media. Public Affairs does not seek to influence public opinion. Public Affairs provide truthful information to a variety of publics to assist them in understanding the commands policies and actions.¹⁸

The Joint doctrine distinguishes between PA, IO, and PSYOP.¹⁹ PA serves as a credible, preferred source of information for the media and the public. IO and PSYOP use their capabilities to influence the enemy. However, PA, IO, and PSOP actually share the same media space. It makes little sense to build a wall between PA and IO when the enemy gets information from the same satellite news channels or internet sites as the rest of the population.²⁰ Military strategic communications doctrine can no longer distinguish between PA, IO, and PSYOP solely in terms of target audiences. Military strategic communications requires an organizational framework that organizes PA and IO strategies and tactics to present coherent messages regardless of the target audience.

Another organizational issue rises from the firewall between IO and PA. The firewall refers to maintaining a complete separation between Public Affairs and Information Operations.²¹ Since 2001, at least two major incidents in which distinction between PA and IO were blurred. The first incident was the aborted “Office of Strategic Influence” (OSI). OSI was a DOD initiative begun shortly after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, to shape the perceptions of foreign audiences. OSI would even use disinformation to shape the target audiences’ perceptions.²² In February, the Pentagon closed the OSI in the midst of concern that disinformation from the OSI would eventually be picked up by US media outlets and then the

¹⁸ Joint Publication 3-61. *Public Affairs*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid., chap. 3, par 4.

²⁰ Sholtis, Tadd MAJ. “Public Affairs and Information Operations, A strategy for Success.” *Air and Space Power Journal* (Fall 2005).

²¹ General Richard C. Myer, Memorandum titled, “*Policy on Public Affairs Relationship to Information Operation*,” 24 September 2004 1

²² *Cable News Network* Website Available from <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/US/02/19/gen.strategic.influence/>; Internet.

disinformation would reach a US audience.²³ The second incident involved a controversy that was created when the *LA Times* published an article claiming that DOD contractors from the Lincoln group were paying Iraqi newspapers to publish pre-written pro-US articles in their papers. The *LA Times* article argued that the USG should not pay foreign newspapers to represent American political pronouncements as news.²⁴ In January 2005, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the largest Public Relations professional organization, issued a Professional Standards Advisory (PSA). That Advisory argued for separating PA completely from IO.²⁵

To reduce the confusion inherent in wartime communication, there must be a firewall separation between IO and PA. In addition, a mechanism based on disclosure, exposure and public discussion to reestablish a basis of truth and trust when situations of honesty, clarity and truthfulness have been breached. Coordination between PA and IO is essential to maintain the firewall.²⁶

PRSA call for the establishment of the firewall and directs coordination between PA and IO. However, neither the PRSA nor doctrine provides a mechanism for coordination. Nevertheless, in response to the controversy the Chairmen, Joint Chief's of Staff published a memorandum directing creation of a firewall. The firewall inhibits coordination between PA and IO and makes it difficult to understand PA, as a communications capability related to strategic communications. The battle over truth, trust, and transparency remains a constant in today's GIE between the media and the military. Military strategic communions need to maintain credibility is a challenge as it defines roles and responsibilities between PA, IO, and PSYOP to the target audiences.

So how does a commander overcome the organizational gap between PA with IO? Not surprisingly, emerging doctrine and ad hoc practices continue to give little direction. Partial integration can occur if the commander is directly involved in planning both IO and PA. The

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The Los Angeles *Times* Website, Available from <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-infowar30nov30,0,5638790.story>; Internet.

²⁵ The Public Relations Society of America Website, Available from http://www.prsa.org/_News/leaders/ps50114.asp; Internet.

²⁶ Ibid.

commander's new problem becomes how to reach local audiences and international audiences with potentially different messages without compromising the message to either audience while maintaining truth, trust, and transparency. A coherent message is critical in the rapid changing information environment. The Military strategic communication organizational problem requires a new organization that allows PA, and IO to work together effectively. The new structure cannot make either PA or IO subordinate to the other and must maintain all legal and regulatory boundaries.²⁷ In the absence of overarching strategic communications guidance, the tendency toward over specialization and organizational isolation between the specialties will continue.

In the current organizational environment, separate staffs prepare IO and PA plans. Additionally, IO is further specialized. IO planning divides PSYOP from the other elements of IO. Therefore, IO and PSYOPS are often independent which further separates PSYOP and PA.²⁸ Instead of an integrated process in support of the strategic communications effort, three separate processes divide PSYOP from IO and IO from PA.

Figure 2 shows the separation between the named communication capabilities for military strategic communications. The organizational separation between PA and IO provided by the firewall prevents effective collaboration on military strategic communications matters.

²⁷ Cox, Joseph L., Information operations in OIF and OEF - What went wrong?, Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, Kansas AY 05-06, 83-87

²⁸ Sholtis, 56.

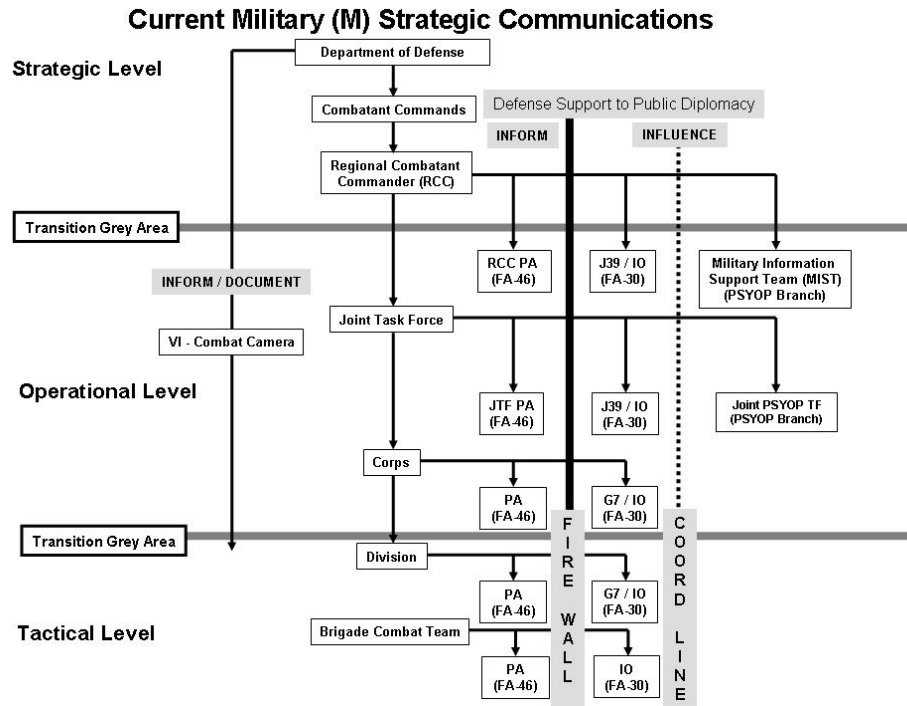


Figure 2 - Horizontal and Organizational Gaps in Military Strategic Communications

The horizontal separation between the elements of military strategic communications reinforces the vertical specialization of the staffing process. The figure shows the vertical staff process from the strategic level to the tactical level. Combat camera is task organized to support the DOD. Thus, there is no formal process to guarantee effective coordination with the other elements of strategic communications. Military strategic communications defense support to public diplomacy is a combined effort between the commander, PA, IO, PSYOP, and COMCAM within their area of operations. Thus, organizational divisions and the absence of an integration doctrine results lead to an inadequate military strategic communications planning process. These shortfalls were evident in Operation Vigilant Resolve (Fallujah 1).

Inadequate Planning Process

The first battle of Fallujah in April 2004, called Operation Vigilant Resolve, showed the inadequacies of the military strategic communications planning process. Military strategic

communications failures could deny operational success despite tactical victory.²⁹ The objective of Operation Vigilant Resolve was to regain control of Fallujah after the murder of Blackwater contractors by a mob in the Fallujah market. The I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) responded to the event by cordoning the city and encouraging civilians to leave. Then regiments under the I Marine Division commanded by MG Mattis attacked, methodically advancing towards the city center. The movement was slow and deliberate as the I MARDIV directed precision air attacks on known insurgent locations. The urban combat was violent and under the intense spotlight of the media and other international organizations. Tactically, I MEF had clearly overmatched the insurgent force. However, the operation failed because the strategic message was not synchronized with the strategic action. The marines fought and won every tactical engagement within the boundaries of the established rules of engagement (ROE), but I MEF was pressured by the Interim Iraqi Government to halt combat operations. Iraqi governments objected to the operation because the media and world opinion viewed the action of U.S. forces as an excessive use of force.³⁰ The operation was halted and failed to achieve its operational objectives because military strategic communications efforts failed to prepare the public and the world for the fighting and carnage they would see. As Operation Vigilant Resolve illustrates, commanders default to a standard military planning process in the absence of a well-defined strategic communications planning process military. The military planning process begins with the Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (JIPB).

However, current doctrine and historical practices hinder the commander's ability to visualize human factors in their area of operations. Doctrine identifies the need to understand the human dimension of the environment but provides no guidance on how to deduce the human factors from the population. The conventional military practice focused on applying force exaggerates the problem. JIPB products primarily focus on supporting commanders in the

²⁹ Metz, 7.

³⁰ Ibid., 7-12.

physical fight. The physical fight overshadows efforts to understand the affected population. Thus, the current system for gathering operational intelligence does not provide the products needed to develop an effective strategic communications program that supports the military operation.

Commanders who understand how the local population thinks and what their needs are can select the target audience from the population and design messages that will appeal to the public and possibly influence its behavior. If commanders understand the information environment, they can employ military strategic communications to engage the localities with a variety of means to promulgate the message. However, commanders must define the social context and cultural characteristics of the population as part of the operational environment before effective planning can occur.

The human dimension of the friendly and adversary populace consists of various militarily significant sociological, cultural, demographic, and psychological characteristics.³¹ Joint IO doctrine defines this process as human factor analysis.³² The human factors are those psychological and cultural characteristics and behavior that influence decision making by individuals or groups. The human dimension is part of the broader environment that makes up the commanders battlespace. The Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (JIPB) defines the battlespace environment, describes the battlespace effects, evaluates the adversary, and determines adversary potential course of actions (COAs). If JIPB fails to identify all relevant characteristics or overlooks a feature of the battlespace environment, the headquarters is surprised and unprepared.³³

³¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publications, 2-0.13, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2000),II-37.

³²Joint Publication 3-53. *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC: 2003. III-5.

³³ Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publications, 2-0.13, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2000),II-41.

The situation is complicated by the fact that Information Operation and Public Affairs doctrine does not facilitate a common understanding of the human factors. IO support for JIPB development differs from conventional military requirements in that it may require greater lead-time and may have expanded collection, production, and dissemination requirements.³⁴ Thus, military strategic communication would also require greater lead-time to fulfill planning requirements. Furthermore, the commander's ability to understand the human dimension is made more difficult when his primary media adviser plans alone, independent of the IO and the JIPB process.

PA doctrine only addresses the public affairs assessment of the media. The assessment is an analysis of public support within the operational area and provides timely feedback on trends in public opinion based on media analysis, published polling data, and professional assessments. The assessment does not address the social context and cultural characteristics.³⁵ In addition, PA is not required to coordinate with IO unless the commander specifically directs coordination between them. Therefore, doctrine leaves the decision to integrate up to the commander.

Furthermore, the commander's ability to identify and understand the human factors of the environment is a matter of distance. The further away the commander is from the tactical level the more difficult it is for the commanders to identify with the human terrain and correctly frame the problem. The current military strategic communications must be refined from input from the tactical level. The current organizational structure does not facilitate the push and pull of information from the tactical to the strategic level. Military strategic communications requires a way to push intelligence on issues important to the target audience up from the tactical level to overcome the friction of distance and to gain common understanding of the human terrain at all

³⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publications, JP 3-13, Information Operations (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2006),V-1.

³⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publications, JP 3-61, Public Affairs (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2005),I-3.

levels. If the commander does not understand the social context and cultural characteristics of the population within their area of operations, he cannot correctly target the population.

Failure to understand the social content and cultural characteristics of the human terrain hinders the effectiveness of the targeting process. Targeting is the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them. Because there is no military strategic communications doctrine for defining the target, the military commander defaults to conventional targeting methods and doctrine. The conventional targeting process focuses on employing combat power against physical targets. In conventional military operations, targeting focuses on an opposing military force and revolves around the targeting cycle: Decide, Detect, Deliver, and Assess.³⁶

Figure 3 shows the conventional targeting processes. The conventional military targeting process selects targets based on the JIPB and mission analysis and designates high values targets. This list is refined during COA development and war-gaming. The unit uses Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets to detect the target. The detect function of targeting occurs during COA development, but only begins with the initiation of the ISR plan. In delivery phase, the headquarters identifies the method of attack and assigns responsibility for the attack. Assessment follows up to determine the effect on the target. The conventional targeting process works well when engaging a conventional military force. The conventional method of targeting is not effective against an enemy that defies templating. The current enemy the US faces in the Global war on Terror defies conventional templates because social context and cultural characteristics of the population within the commander's area of operations.

³⁶ Joint Publication 3-60. *Joint Doctrine for Targeting*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2000.

Military Planning Process Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess Methodology

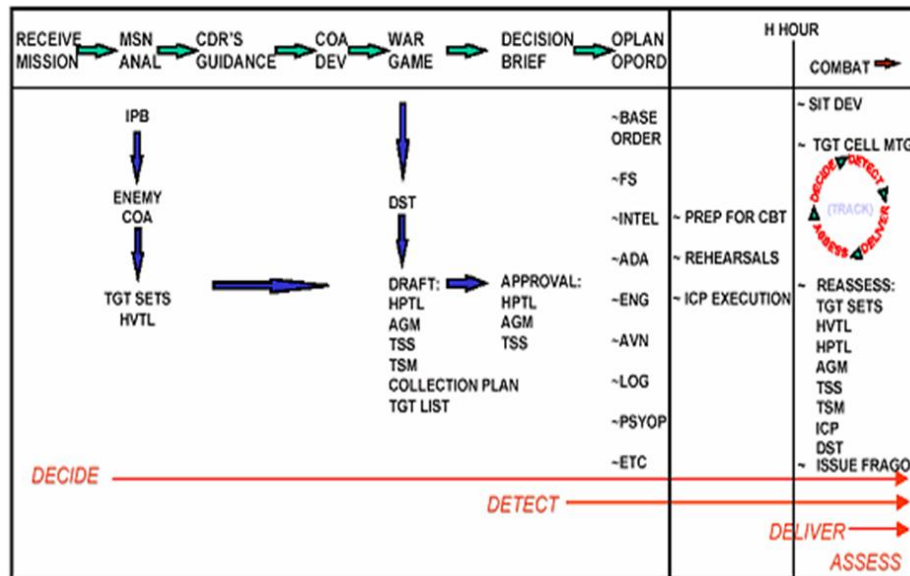


Figure 3 - Conventional Targeting Process

In current operations, the phases of the targeting process depart from conventional doctrine. Rather than Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess, the process often changes to Detect, Decide, Deliver, and Assess. Captain Brian Gellman briefly outlines the changes made to the conventional targeting process in “Lessons Learned from OIF: An SF Battalion S2’s Perspective.”³⁷ The alternative targeting method consists of reordering the cycle to Detect, Decide, Deliver, and Assess. A dynamic military strategic communications method must not default to one or the other, but facilitate both processes depending on the commander’s area of operations.

In the military strategic communications, aspect of the targeting cycle deliver refers to messages, the strategic communication message uses aspects of IO, primarily PSYOPS, PA, DSPD, and COMCAM to engage target audiences with credible relevant messages. The strategic communications messages tell the target audiences why the military is there and why the USG interests and policy’s are a better choice than that of the opposition. In the GIE, the military

³⁷ Published in the April-June 2004 issue of MIPB

strategic communications message must also support the overarching national theme. Otherwise, units face what might be called message fratricide, the delivery of disparate messages to separate target audiences. The requirement is to develop distinct messages that appeal to local target audiences but which support the national strategic communications theme.

Joint doctrine explains why engaging target audiences with credible messages are important, but the doctrine does not explain the how. Joint Publication 3-61. *Public Affairs* lists the Public Affairs information fundamentals and addresses the importance of a good message.³⁸ However, Joint PA doctrine does not provide guidance on how to create a message and how to ensure the message takes into account social context and cultural characteristics of the human environment. Joint Publication 3-13 *Information Operations* stresses the importance of language and cultural skills for interpreting how target audiences perceive messages and actions.³⁹ However, Joint IO doctrine does not provide guidance on how to design a message while taking into account language and cultural complexities that produce unintended 2nd and 3rd order effects. Joint Publication 3-53. *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations* states the effective employment of PSYOP requires a thorough understanding of the customs and values of the foreign target audience.⁴⁰ Although PSYOP details the planning requirements for message development best, Joint PSYOP doctrine still does not provide the detailed guidance for planning military strategic communications message development. Therefore, PA, IO, and PSYOP doctrine do not provide the tools to create a credible relevant message for a specific target audience.

Nevertheless, commanders at the operational and tactical level during operations in Afghanistan and Iraq must create messages to engage different target audiences within their area

³⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publications, JP 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2005), I-5.

³⁹ Joint Publication 3-13. *Information Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2006. VII-2.

⁴⁰ Joint Publication 3-53. *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC: 2003. IV-1.

of operations. The tactical commanders require specific messages for individual neighborhoods that refer to a unifying theme provided from the strategic and operational level commander. The doctrinal shortfalls hinder the commander's ability to create credible relevant messages to different target audiences within their area of operations. In addition, the strategic and operational level communications efforts flood the zone with too many messages creating confusing and contradiction.

Joel Bradshaw, a respected political strategist, stated the following, "Theme is not a word that should have an "s" on the end."⁴¹ Brigade commanders in Iraq often disregard the many messages from higher headquarters because the messages only confuse the target audience.⁴² Battalion and brigade commanders create their own messages tailored towards specific neighborhoods in his area of operations. The commander requires one theme from the strategic level. Thus, the commander has the ability to create a message for their area of operations that supports a single theme. Military strategic communications requires a standard message development method that IO, PA, and PSYOP can use for effective message development and consideration of unintended consequences.⁴³ The military strategic communications message provides the basis for coordinated action with the full range of military operations.

Lastly, military strategic communications at all levels require a planning process that allows synchronization of message with military action during operational planning and execution. Coordinated action and synergy are important to mass effects between the information and the physical dimensions. Synchronization is the arrangement of military actions in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at a decisive place and time. Synchronization of the information environment, primarily the cognitive domain, with the four

⁴¹ Bradshaw, Joel. 1995. "Who will Vote for You and Why: Designing Strategy and Theme." In *Campaigns and Elections American Style*, ed. James A Thurber and Candice J. Nelson. Boulder, CO: Westview. 42.

⁴² COL Robert Brown comments to AMSP 06-07 Full spectrum operations class.

⁴³ Josten, 18.

physical dimensions of land, sea, air, and space remains difficult. Simply put, military strategic communication messages must be coordinated with military actions.

Currently, the successful massing of effects through synchronization of message and action requires direct commander involvement and is not the product of a military planning process. The successful massing of information effects requires precise and disciplined execution from shaping operations through exploitation. Commanders at all echelons must presently bridge the organizational separation between IO and PA to coordinate actions in the informational and physical dimension.⁴⁴ Military strategic communications failed to meet its objectives in Operation Vigilant Resolve the planning processes were inadequate.

U.S. forces failed to coordinate action in the Information domain with the battle plan and failed to gain support from public officials while preparing the media for the realities of urban warfare. The missing element was a synchronized information component to prepare key publics for the realities of the battle plan. Our failure to mass effects in the global information sphere proved decisive on the battleground in Fallujah.⁴⁵ Thus, military strategic communication requires a planning process to coordinate message with military operations.

In conclusion, the current military strategic communications system is inadequate. Military strategic communications has no doctrine. The *Quadrennial Defense Review* does not go far enough to address doctrine and organizational issues because it only addresses changes from the DOD down to the Regional Combatant Commander (RCC) level. The informal separation between IO and PA and the directed separation by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs Staff (CJCS) hinder creation of an integrated planning process. From this discussion of the military strategic communications system, it is clear that if the political campaign process provides a framework to correct the deficiencies in military strategic communications, the political campaign process

⁴⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁵ Ralph Peters, "The Counterrevolution in Military Affairs—Fashionable thinking about defense ignores the great threats of our time," *The Weekly Standard*, Volume 11, 2, 6 February 2006.

should be examined to gain insights into target analysis, target selection, message development, and coordinated action.

Assessment of the Political Campaign System

The assessment of the political campaign system answers the following question. Does the political campaign system provide a more effective framework for military strategic communications? The answer is yes. The political campaign process possesses the attributes needed for improving the military strategic communications organizational structure and planning process. Military strategic communications has no doctrine. Therefore, the political campaign process can provide the starting framework for designing a more effective military strategic communications organizational structure and planning process. This is true because political campaign district research provides a more effective method with which to analyze the target audience. Next, political campaign's ability to target the voters provides a means to sort the population into manageable target audiences based on geography, demographics, and attitudes. In addition, political campaign's method for creating a credible relevant message provides for military strategic communications a list of common characteristics for a good message and tools to create a credible relevant message. Furthermore, the political campaign system's ability to script action with message provides a model analogous to military strategic communications need for coordinated action in support of military operations. The first step in finding a solution to the problem with military strategic communications starts with defining the political campaign system and establishing the analogy for a comparison of methods.

A political campaign is an organized effort to influence the decision making process in a group. In democracies, a political campaign often brings to mind elections, but it could also include efforts to alter policy within any institution.⁴⁶ The political campaign system combines form and function by organizing the campaign staff based on the campaign plan. Like a military commander, the political campaign candidate seeks to influence the voting population of the

⁴⁶ Shea, Daniel M. and Burton, Michael John. *Campaign Craft, The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management.* 3rd ed. Westport: Praeger Publishing, 2006. 5.

district. Like a military commander's area of operations, the candidate's district is a defined geographical area in which the election takes place, and which the winning candidate represents.⁴⁷ Like a military campaign, political campaigns have a strategic, operational, and tactical level.

Figure 4 depicts generic political campaign system from the national political parties down to the counties or state assembly districts.⁴⁸

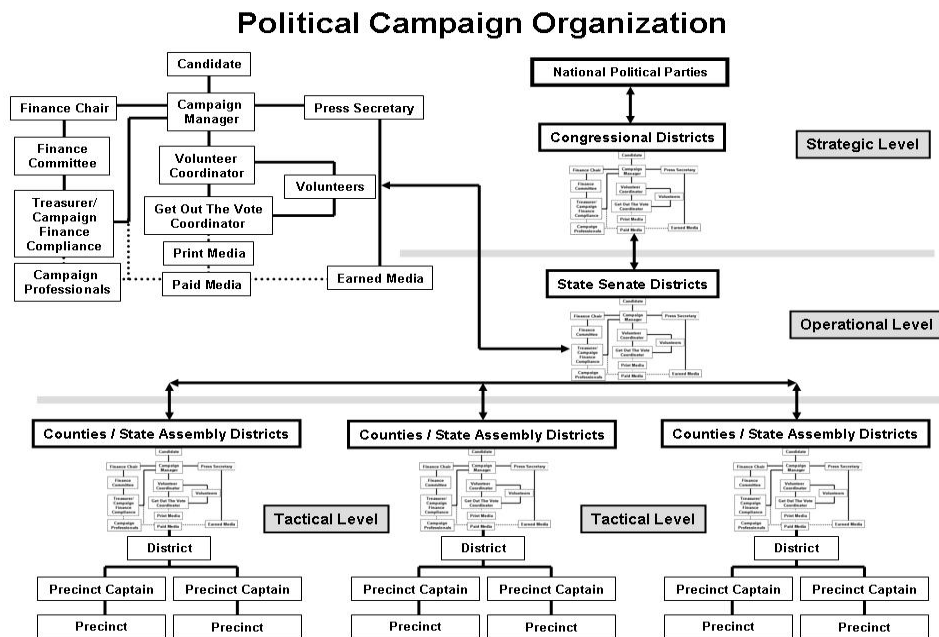


Figure 4 Political Campaign Organization

The strategic level of a political campaign is comprised of congressional districts or state districts in presidential elections. The campaign's operational level is the state senate district. Political campaigning tactical level is the county or state assembly district. National political parties coordinate action from the strategic level down to the tactical level. However, political parties refine their objectives based on data collected from the tactical level to find credible relevant

⁴⁷ O'Day, Brian J. *Political Campaign Planning Manual, A Step by Step Guide to Winning Elections*. 3rd ed. Moscow: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs Russia, 2006, 50-62.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 7.

issues.⁴⁹ Furthermore, political campaigning and military strategic communications have similar goals.

Political campaign planning and military strategic communications are communications processes with similar goals of achieving changes in behavior, but use different means and methods (i.e. process is different). For political campaigns, the goal is to support the campaign and achieve a plurality of votes for candidate on Election Day. The goal of military strategic communications is to gain population's support for coalition objectives or to change rival leader's behavior. Both communications processes create or destroy credibility. Political campaign's messages seek to change voter behavior by reinforcement, persuasion, and conversion and to counter adversary information.⁵⁰ Military strategic communications seeks to change target audience behavior. Its messages inform,⁵¹ influence, and reinforce opinions while seeking to gain compliance or conformance to new patterns of behavior.⁵² Political campaigning and military strategic communications must develop among the target audience a perception of truth, trust and transparency to gain and maintain credibility.

However, unlike a political campaign military strategic communications must also coordinate military actions in support of the strategic communications message. By coordinating the message with military action, the military hopes to achieve a greater impact on a targeted audience or regime behavior. The effectiveness of this communication depends on the perception of the communicator's credibility and capability to carry out promises or threatened actions.⁵³ Nevertheless, political campaigns can fail for the same reasons military strategic communications fail.

⁴⁹ Interview with Bill Lacy, Director of the Dole Institute and professional campaign manager, interview conducted on 15 February 2007.

⁵⁰ Shea, 153-157.

⁵¹ Joint Publication 3-61. *Public Affairs*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2005, xi.

⁵² Joint Publication 3-13. *Information Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2006, Chap 2.

⁵³ Joint Publication 3-53. *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC: 2003, I-2.

There are a number of reasons why political campaigns fail to persuade a target audience on Election Day. The political campaign may not have had a persuasive message to deliver to voters and the campaign did not have a clear idea which voters it wanted to persuade. Like military strategic communications, this type of campaign has no focus and lacks direction because it did not sort the target audiences within the population then develop a message that resonated with each separate target audience. Next, a political campaign that has a persuasive message and has identified its target voters can fail to develop a plan of action to persuade voters. Like military strategic communications, this type of campaign wastes finite resources and has no plan to coordinate action to meet its objectives. The campaign spends more time reacting to outside factors than promoting its own agenda. The winning political campaign is the one that takes the time to conduct target audience analysis, target the voters correctly, develops a persuasive message, and follows through on a plan of coordinated action to reinforce, persuade, or convert voters.⁵⁴

While it is true that every campaign is unique, some basic principles or planning steps are applicable to any election campaign. Simply put, all campaigns must repeatedly communicate a persuasive message to people who will vote. Like military strategic communications, a political campaign is a communications process: find the right target audience; find the right message; target that message to the right target audiences; and repeat that message again-and-again.⁵⁵ The political campaign actual planning process is more difficult and uses the following steps that are relevant to military strategic communications: district research; analyzing and targeting voters; developing a campaign message; and developing a voter contact plan. The first step for target audience analysis is district research.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ O'Day, 6.

⁵⁵ Perlmutter, David D. *The Manship School guide to Political Communication*. Louisiana State University Press, 1999. 11-19.

⁵⁶ Shea, 25-31.

Target Audience Analysis

The political campaign district research provides a more effective method with which to analyze the human dimension, political terrain, and social networks than current military strategic communications planning practices. The political campaign system does target audience analysis through district research. The candidates voting district is comparable to the commander's area of operations and district research is comparable to mission analysis JIPB. However, the sole focus of district research is assessment of the social context and cultural characteristics of the voting population. The political campaign uses analysis and sociological research to understand the voting population. Political campaign analysis and sociological research compiles the information needed to map perceptions and formulate objectives.⁵⁷ The assessment is broken down into information on the District Demographics, Candidate, Opposition, Historical, Public Opinion, and Database creation.⁵⁸

District analysis gathers as much information about the district to understand the political landscape that applies to the campaign. The campaign must understand the district's geography, industry, housing patterns, community organizations, transportations infrastructure, and other fixed institutions. This is the political terrain. A campaign must chart the political terrain before operations begin. The campaign will ask several questions during its strategic planning sessions about the district. This becomes very important when the campaigns select the method by which it will contact the key target audience. What are the local media outlets? Who are the reporters and their deadlines? How does the press view the candidates? To develop a comprehensive press strategy the campaign must know as much about the media as possible.⁵⁹ Similarly, the headquarters conducting military strategic communications planning requires a more effective means to identify the geography, industry, housing patterns, community organizations,

⁵⁷ O'Day, 8.

⁵⁸ Shea, 21.

⁵⁹ O'Day, 9.

transportations infrastructure, and other fixed institutions to understand the political and social terrain.⁶⁰ In addition, military strategic communications has the requirement to understand how the population receives information.⁶¹ Furthermore, military strategic communications has the same requirement to identify local media outlets and their deadlines.⁶² Thus, the process by which a political campaign analysis a district can guide how the military analyzes the human dimension of the area of operations.

Demographic analysis gathers the social context and cultural characteristics of the voters to develop a demographic profile. Political professionals understand the close relationship between the characteristics of a population and campaign outcomes. Demographic profile characteristics are captured in a narrative description along with maps and summary tables.⁶³ Analyzing demographics helps to break the population into manageable groups. This analysis determines the demographic compositions of the groups. The demographic analysis sorts the voting population into groups by income levels, education levels, occupation, ethnic background, religious background, gender, and age. From these groups, campaigns identify target audiences. Target audiences are groups who have similar interests and characteristics that tend to show their support to the same candidate. Campaigns define these groups and target the campaign message to inform and influence them.⁶⁴ While JIPB captures some of this detail, doctrine does not prescribe this detail for military Information Operations and Public Affairs.⁶⁵

Next, candidate analysis prepares the campaign to deal with the opposition information campaign. The research honestly and candidly must judge the candidate's strengths and weakness from the point of view of the opposition. The analysis will organize assessment into various

⁶⁰ Joint Publication 3-13. *Information Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2006, III-3.

⁶¹ Joint Publication 3-53. *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC: 2003, x.

⁶² Joint Publication 3-61. *Public Affairs*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2005, x.

⁶³ Shea, 48.

⁶⁴ O'Day, 9.

⁶⁵ Joint Publication 3-13. *Information Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2006, Chap 3.

sections. It is important to identify strength and weaknesses early to prepare the campaign to deal with the opponent's information campaign better.⁶⁶ In contrast, opposition analysis finds the strengths and weaknesses of the opponents and sorts them into four categories: Strengths Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). It is important to note that opposition research is not dirty politics. The research helps identify opposition patterns and capitalize on them to create a contrast between the candidate's campaign and the opposition's campaign. This contrast is vital in developing the campaign message against the opposition campaign message. Opposition research must occur if the campaign is to develop the contrast between the campaigns and provide a clear distinction between candidates.⁶⁷

Historical analysis predicts current and future audience behavior. Political campaigns know it is important to look at recent campaigns and historical data. Even in the Global Information Environment (GIE), election campaigns relate to their geography, social context, and cultural characteristics. Historical analysis determines which parts of the district are most receptive to the campaign's message. It is important to research past campaigns to determine past voting trends. The historical research examines past campaigns to reveal voting population composition, voter turn out in support of winning campaigns, and the baseline support for the current campaign. This information helps determine what worked in the past and what will not work for the current campaign.⁶⁸ Military strategic communication historical analysis would provide a means to predict baseline levels of support for USG policies. In addition, military strategic communications historical analysis can provide insight on opposition patterns.

Public Opinion analysis uses sociological research to understand the concerns of the voters throughout the district. Sociological research uses focus groups or polling to understand what issues motivate voters. Campaign organizations combine voter opinion data with

⁶⁶ O'Day, 10.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁸ Shea, 82-90.

demographic data by comparing survey results with demographic information to refine the analysis.⁶⁹ Therefore, political campaigns rely on public opinion polls and focus groups. Polling determines current factors affecting the campaign. Issues that concern the target audience and reactions to campaign messages are examples of these factors. Polling assists in providing focus as well as coordinated action with other campaigns within political parties. However, two questions must be answered before coordination can occur. What effects will the other campaigns have on our campaign? Do our campaign's messages complement the messages from the same political party? If headquarters conducting military strategic communications asked these questions, maybe information fratricide in Iraq would decrease.⁷⁰

Finally, all the results of the various research must be preserved for rapid retrieval. Database creation or editing ensures quick access to information and creates historical data for future campaigns. Analysis is not complete until organization of the database is complete. The database of research allows quick access to information, documents all sources, and allows continuity. The campaign that organizes the database for quick access saves time and resources later during the political campaign planning process.⁷¹

Military strategic communications would benefit from adopting a process similar to political campaign district research. District research provides a framework for a thorough and methodical mission analysis for military strategic communications. It provides a more effective framework with which to focus military strategic communications mission analysis and JIPB. Historical social and political analysis would provide a method to predict baseline support for US military actions and provide insight into enemy patterns. Sociological research would provide military strategic communications a means to determine what issues are important to the audience. Comparing survey results with demographic information would help to sort the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁰ Comments by COL(P) Robert Brown during AMSP AY 06-07

⁷¹ O'Day, 10.

⁷¹ Ibid., 11

population into target audiences. Using such a process, helps the headquarters to gain a complete common understanding of the physical and human terrain within their battlespace. Once district research is completed, the political campaign system targets the voting population.

Target the Voters

Political campaign's ability to target the voters provides a means to sort the population into manageable target audiences based on geography, demographics, and attitudes. Logic dictates that analysis proceeds from general to particular so the population is sorted first into voters, then by voter preference, then by demographics, and finally attitudes. The political campaign system identifies potential audiences before deciding on the best message to persuade a target audience. The point of targeting is to determine what subsets of the population are most likely to respond to the campaign. A political campaign combines polling, historical profile, and demographic profile and relates each of these perspectives to geographic locations.⁷² Political campaigns detect the target audiences from the population before deciding on what target audience to target. This allows the campaign to pick an audience before message development or to refine a message for a specific target audience. This is the key difference from military strategic communications. While military strategic communications planning uses decide, detect, deliver, and access, the political campaign detect first then, decides on target audience and message. Military strategic communications at the tactical level requires a target audience breakdown by neighborhood during military operations, specifically stability operations.⁷³ The first step in sorting the population into manageable groups and identifying target audiences is attitudinal research.

Attitudinal research identifies the audiences and places them on an attitudinal continuum. The attitude continuum separates the audience into five distinct target groups starting with Hard

⁷² Shea, 124-127.

⁷³ COL Robert Brown comments during AMSP AY06-07

Opposition, Soft Opposition, Undecided or Swing vote, Soft Support and Hard Support. The selections of key audiences come from these five distinct target groups based on location and demographic make up.⁷⁴ During message development, the messages are different for dissimilar target audiences. The hard support requires reinforcement. The soft support and undecided requires persuasion. The soft opposition requires conversion. The hard opposition requires messages to respond to their messages. Currently, military strategic communications capabilities, in the form of PA, IO, and PSYOP, have no doctrinal match for this process. However, the GWOT has shown a compelling need for a process that sorts a population into manageable groups in accordance with an attitudinal continuum. The best private sector marketing and political campaign management uses the attitudinal continuum to focus communications resources.⁷⁵

The Report of the Defense Science Board Task on Strategic Communications recommends targeting demographics and social context to understand the values and worldview of the target audience itself. In addition, it recommends borrowing political campaigning best practices to facilitate the military strategic communications targeting process. In the past, strategic communications separated the target audience into to groups for us or against us. For example, if the enemy is a relatively small group of crazies and criminals or “Bad Muslims”, then the rest must be “Good Muslims” and, thus, the people military strategic communications must reach. The difficulty is that the Muslim World is complex and segmented by social context and cultural characteristics.

Islam is a cacophony of competing and crosscutting groups, sub-cultures, and whole societies. A Muslim may be balancing up to five identities: as a Muslim, as a sectarian Muslim (Sunni, Sh’ia, Ismaili, etc.), as a national citizen, as an ethnic “citizen” (Arab, Kurd, Turkmen, etc.), and as a tribal or clan member.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Department of Defense, Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic communication September 2004, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2004), 54-57.

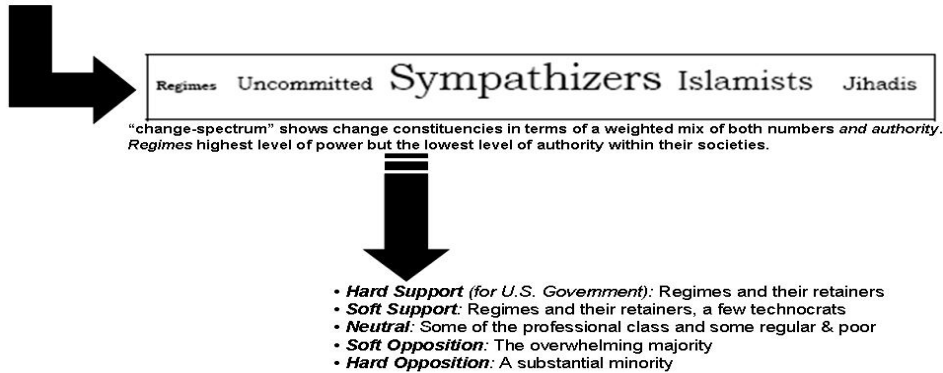
⁷⁵ Ibid., 54.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 41-42.

Political Campaign Attitudinal Research Applied to Military Strategic Communications

Snapshot Muslim Society today

- Regimes and their retainers: (including the army, bigwigs, cronies, & hangers-on)
- The professional class (also known in some quarters as “technocrats”)
- Establishment & activist Islamist prelates (plus social welfare & education networks)
- Regular and poor Muslims (small entrepreneurs on-down)
- Fighting groups and their networks



*Reference: Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication, September 2004

Figure 5 Political Campaign Attitudinal Research

Figure 5 shows a rough picture of the structure of attitudes in Muslim society today. The rough estimate shows distinct segments representing social and political constituencies, with varying weight and influence in society. The Muslim society is a balance between the first three of these segments: a rough triad of regime elites, establishment Ulama (Muslim prelates) and the technocratic class.⁷⁷ In addition, Figure 4 shows the “change-spectrum.” Change means the vision of Islamic Restoration. The regimes are the most resistant to political and social change. The Jihadis or fighting groups are its most active agents. Regimes, Uncommitted, Sympathizers, Islamists, and Jihadis depicted along the “change-spectrum” shows change constituencies in terms of a weighted mix of both numbers and authority. Regimes may have the power with no authority within their societies.⁷⁸ Therefore, Jihadis have more sympathetic and direct support than most regimes. Figure 4 illustrates how the “change-spectrum” maps target audience by attitudes and demographics and serves as a basis for arguing that military strategic

⁷⁷ Raymond William Baker, *Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists*, Harvard, 2003, Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, 1983; Aryn B. Sajoo, *Civil Society in the Muslim World*, Contemporary Perspectives, I. B. Tauris, 2002.

⁷⁸ Department of Defense, Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic communication September 2004, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2004), 41-44.

communications planners conduct political-style attitudinal research.⁷⁹ The key audience is the soft support and the undecided target audiences. However, between the two, soft support is more important because it is six times easier to move soft support to hard support than the undecided to soft support. Thus, military strategic communications has a strong need to adapt political campaigning attitudinal research. Next, the military commander must develop a message.

Message Development

Political campaign's method for creating a credible relevant message provides an example of a good message and the tools to create a credible relevant message. Political campaigns understand the problem of creating a credible relevant message. There are two parts to creating a relevant message. The first task is to determine what is important to the target audiences and the second is to determine how they receive information.⁸⁰ Political campaigns come up with a clear, concise message and spend a lot of money making sure their target audience sees, hears and tastes that message as many times as possible. A good credible political message has seven characteristics. The message must be short. It must be truthful and credible. The message must be persuasive and important to voters. It must show the contrast between candidates. The message must be clear and speak to the heart. Finally, the message must target a specific audience and be repeated.⁸¹

The DOD principles of information sets guide lines for preparing information messages. The PA fundamentals of information adopt the DOD principles.⁸² IO information quality criteria define the quality of information relative to its purpose in persuasion operations.⁸³ Joint

⁷⁹ David Morey and Scott Miller, *The Underdog Advantage: Using the Power of Insurgent Strategy to Put Your Business On Top*, McGraw-Hill, 2004, pages 36-49.

⁸⁰ O'Day, 10.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 21

⁸¹ Ibid., 25

⁸² Joint Publication 3-61. *Public Affairs*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2005, viii.

⁸³ Joint Publication 3-13. *Information Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2006,

Publication 3-53. *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations* does not discuss either the characteristics of information or message quality. Figure 6 compares the DOD principles of information, PA fundamentals of information, IO information quality criteria, and characteristics of a good political message. The characteristics of a good political message may be a better guide for the capabilities supporting military strategic communications. While the political message lists qualities similar to those listed in various doctrinal sources, it is succinct and cuts across the functional divisions between PA, IO, and DOD information doctrine. It also has the virtue of collecting information on the interests of the target audience, not just the message the military wishes to promulgate.

Principles of Information Comparison

DoD Principles of Information (Ref JP 3-61, viii)	PA Fundamentals of Information (Ref JP 3-61, I-5-6)	IO Information Quality Criteria (Ref JP 3-16, I-3)	Political Campaign Characteristics of a good messages
Information shall be made fully and readily available, consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by national security constraints or valid mandates or exceptions	Tell the Truth.	Accuracy	Message must be short
A free flow of general and military information shall be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces of the US and their dependents	Provide Timely Information	Relevance	Message must truthful and credible
Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment.	Practice Security at the Source	Timeliness	Message must be persuasive and important to voters
Information shall be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed services	Provide Consistent Information at Levels	Usability	Message must show contrast
DoD's obligation to provide the public with information on DoD major programs may require detailed PA planning and coordination in the DoD and with other government agencies	Tell the DoD Story	Completeness	Message must be clear and speak to the heart
		Brevity	Message requires targeting
		Security	Message require repetition

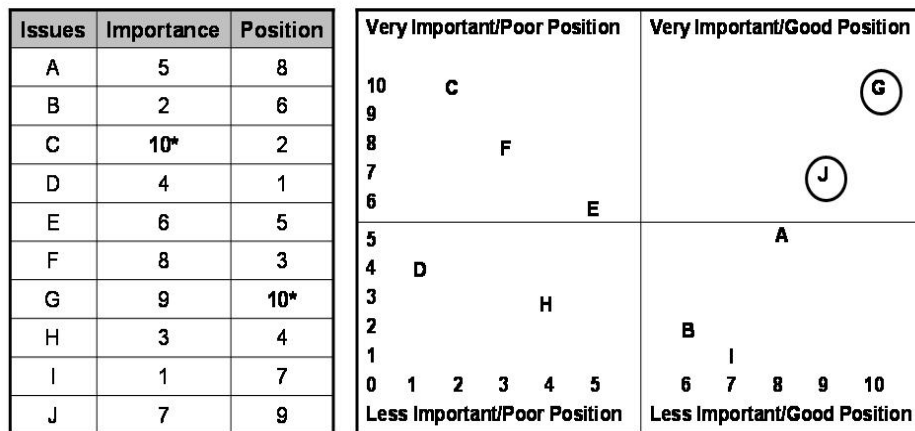
Figure 6 - Principles of Information Comparison

Political campaigns select issues that are important to the target audiences based on target audience analysis. The analysis is portrayed in an issue importance box.⁸⁴ The headquarters planning strategic communications could use the issue importance box to determine what is important to a target audience down to each neighborhood.

⁸⁴ O'Day, Appendix C.

Figure 7 shows an example of an issue importance box. The issue importance box provides a method for determining what issues to address in a message. The tool also identifies issues the candidate and opposition have a strong position on. Then, the tool is used to plot the issues by position for the candidate and opposition. Therefore, the tool identifies the target audience perception as to which candidate has the stronger position. Incorporating issue analysis into the military strategic communications process will sharpen the focus of the strategic message at the local level because the message will be written in terms the local audience understands. During the long war of ideas, military strategic communications requires the ability to focus on the right issue with the right audience.

Issue Importance Box



*10 is the most important

Issues: Candidate is considering ten issues for the campaign

Importance: Rank the ten issues (A-J) in order of importance to the target Audience

Position: Rank issues in order of how well your candidate does on issues in comparison to major opponents

Plot Issues: Plot ten issues by placing them in various quadrants

Campaign Focus: Campaign should focus on issues that fall into upper right quadrant i.e. G and J

Target Audience: Believe G and J issues are important and they believe your candidate is best to deal with them

Figure 7 - Political Campaign Issue Importance Selection Box

Once the issues have been selected, the political campaign starts creating a message that follows the characteristics of a good message and addresses issues relevant to the voter by location and demographics. The political campaign may have several messages that address different issues for different target audiences, but always these messages refer back to a campaign

theme.⁸⁵ The theme differs from the message in that the theme is what the campaign is about, whereas the message tells potential voters why the candidate is the best choice rather than the opponent. President Bill Clinton's war room provides a good example on the relationship between message and theme.

After twelve years of republican leadership resulting in social stagnation and economic recession, the American people are ready for change. The choice in 1992 is clear: change or more of the same.⁸⁶

The Clinton political campaign tied each campaign message back to this theme. In Clinton's broadcast messages on each issue, the theme was always the same, change or more of the same.⁸⁷ Therefore, the headquarters planning military strategic communications at the strategic level would provide the one overarching theme. The planning headquarters at the operational and tactical level would develop messages addressing issues important to target audiences within their area of operations and tie the message to the strategic level theme. Thus, this process would prevent message fratricide from the strategic level to the tactical level while allowing the commanders to create relevant credible messages to their particular target audiences.

Another tool used by the political campaign is the message box. Political campaigns use the message box to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and help campaign personnel identify contrasts that give their candidate an advantage with the voters. American political strategist Paul Tully created the message box. The message box forces the campaign to think through four questions: US on US - what does the political campaign want to say about our candidate and campaign? US on THEM - what do we want to say about the opposition campaign? THEM on US - what will the opposition say about our campaign. THEM on THEM - what will the opposition say about their campaign. If done correctly, the complete message box should

⁸⁵ Shea, 152-156.

⁸⁶ O'Day, 25.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 25-26.

outline everything the candidate and major components might say. Each opponent gets its own message box.⁸⁸

The Campaign Message Box

Us on Us What we want to say about our candidate and our campaign	Us on Them What we want to say about the opponent and the campaign
Them on Us What our campaign anticipates the opponent will say about our candidate and our campaign	Them on Them What our campaign anticipates the opponent will say about himself candidate and his campaign

Figure 8 - The Political Campaign Message Box

Figure 8 shows how the message box provides predictions of the opponent's message and facilitates a proactive communications campaign. The message box is a tool in the creation and destruction of credibility.⁸⁹ In the US on US quadrant are placed all the positive things the campaign wants voters to know about the candidate. US on THEM quadrant collects all the negative things the political campaign want the voters to think about the opposition. THEM on US quadrant records the views on the campaign from the point of view of the opposition showing what they will say to prevent voters from supporting our campaign. In the THEM on THEM quadrant, it lists why, in the opponents opinion, should voters vote for them? The headquarters planning military strategic communications would benefit from using the message box during Course of Action development to prepare messages for a coordinated plan of action. The political

⁸⁸ The Mechanics of a Political Campaign: *The Campaign Plan*, 22.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 22.

campaigns message is now complete. The next step of political campaign message development is testing the message.

Sociological research tests the campaign's message for effectiveness. This ensures the campaign does not waste time and effort on a campaign message that does not resonate with the intended target audience. Military strategic communications usually does not test its messages at the operational and tactical level against contextual and cultural complexities. This causes unintended consequences.⁹⁰ Adding the requirement to test messages using sociological research would allow the military to identify unintended 2nd and 3rd order effects before disseminating the message to the target audience. Focus groups are the easiest way to use to test the performance of the messages and ensure they correctly respond to contextual and cultural complexities. Testing the message with a focus group allows military strategic communications to put culturally sensitive credible message out the first time.

In conclusion, political campaigning tools and methods suggest some effective technique for improving military strategic communications. Political campaigns use issue selection during message development to ensure the message addresses issues important to the voter on which the candidate has a stronger position. The political campaign may have several messages that address different issues for different target audiences, but the message always refers back to a campaign theme. Political campaigns use the message box to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and helps campaign personnel identify contrasts while providing predictions of the opposition messages. Sociological research tests the campaign's message for effectiveness for 2nd and 3rd order unintended consequences before broadcasting a message. Therefore, the political campaigns method for creating a credible relevant message provides a useful guide for improving the military strategic communications process.

⁹⁰ Shea, 104-105.

Coordinated Action

The political campaign system's ability to script action with message provides a model for the military strategic communications system. Political campaigns time their messages to have the greatest impact in support of their objectives. During the campaign planning process, the Election Day drives the plan of action. The plan of action develops a voter contact plan to meet the political campaigns objectives. The voter contact plan decides how to reach the target audiences with what media. In addition, the voter contact plan coordinates action with all levels of the national political party to prevent duplicated effort and message fratricide. National party coordinated action is important because different campaigns at different levels will use different means to contact voters. Furthermore, the political campaign system scripts action with message to gain the greatest effect on the target audience. Like the political campaigning system, military strategic communications system requires a planning process that coordinates action and message. The first step in the political campaign is coordination within the political party.

The political campaign accomplishes tasks more efficiently when they are coordinated within national political parties. The political campaign understands what the party expects from the campaign and what the campaign can expect from the national party to prevent duplicate effort and message fratricide. The national party helps the political campaign through message design and information, material design, national materials, visits, and endorsements. The political campaign's candidate visit or endorsement can have great effect on the target audiences. The next step develops the voter contact plan.⁹¹

Under development of the voter contact plan, the campaign decides how to reach the target audiences. The campaign must pick the best and most efficient combination from the available media resources to achieve the largest impact on the target audience. Campaigns take full advantage of commercial media production methods and ensure their products are sensitive to

⁹¹ O'Day, 47.

cultural nuances within the target audience. The campaigns methods of contact include classic broadcast media such as television, film, newspaper, radio, periodicals, internet, e-magazines, literature, leaflets and fliers. Political campaigns use the most credible channels available and techniques to deliver appropriate messages to their target audience.⁹² By analyzing the information environment, the campaign is able to select the most appropriate methods of contact in their geographic location. If the campaign decides to use radios and the voters do not have radios then the effort is wasted. The art is finding several credible sources of information used by the target audience. Using multiple methods, increases the likelihood the message will be received but each method of contact must be integrated with the other to ensure a consistent message.

Selecting the contact method is not enough. The campaign must establish assessment criteria with which to measure if the message is have the intended effect or not. The campaign establishes benchmarks and conducts polling to see if the intended effect is occurring and to what degree. The art of polling is reading the leading and lagging indicators. Accurate polling requires experience. Assessment criteria detects if the campaign is achieving the assigned objective, achieving effects, and if the campaign is measuring correctly is part of the campaign's plan of action.⁹³ The product of the voter contact plan is a plan of action for contacting the voters between now and Election Day. Since political campaigns goal is to affect the decision-making capability of the target audience, the political campaign's ability to persuade, convert, or reinforce opinions decides the outcome on Election Day.

Marshall McLuhan, the philosopher and media guru, understood scripted action and message, when he declared, "the medium is the message."⁹⁴ The political campaign system scripts action with message using earned media. Political campaigns want the largest impact on

⁹² Shea, 153-156.

⁹³ Ibid., 103-115.

⁹⁴ Morris, Dick. *Power Plays Win or Lose – How History's Great Political Leaders Play the Game*. ReganBooks, 2002, 249.

voters using the least resources. Therefore, political campaigns create events to gain exposure through earned media. Political campaigns call it earned media because they have to work hard for it. The political campaigns effectiveness relates to their ability to script the right action at the right time with the right message. Political campaign events are scripted actions in the form of rally's, press conferences, speeches, and public venues. Often times, political campaign's choice of venue or backdrop send its own message. Political campaigns time the release of messages for maximum effect. The advantage of scripted action with message is that the political campaign can control the situation and deliver a clear relevant message.⁹⁵ The key to scripting action with message is not to use the method, but understand the impression the media conveys, regardless of the sound bite.

A speech made on a public platform before a large audience conveys an undeniable message through the mass media. The political campaigns choice of backdrop can change the message. Every different scripted action conveys a different message. For example, Vice President Al Gore delivered a foreign policy speech to the cadets during commencement ceremonies for the class of 2000 at West Point during the 2000 Presidential Election to convey the message, "Strong on military Defense and Foreign Policy."⁹⁶ President Reagan's merger of theatre and politics earned him a justified reputation as "the Great Communicator."⁹⁷ This was evidenced by his famous words, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"⁹⁸ Scripting action with message is inherent strategic communication.

Like the political campaign system, military strategic communication requires coordinated theme and messages reinforced by premeditated actions. The coordination between message and action allows the commander to mass effects in their battlespace. The tactic of

⁹⁵ Carville, James and Begala, Paul. *Buck Up, Suck Up...And Come Back When You Foul Up*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003, 160-167.

⁹⁶ Commencement Speech Vice President Al Gore Saturday, May 27, 2000: <http://www.usma.edu/class/2000/GradSpeech00.asp>, accessed April, 2007.

⁹⁷ Morris, 249-252.

⁹⁸ On June 12, 1987, President Ronald Reagan spoke the people of West Berlin at the base of the Brandenburg Gate, near the Berlin wall.

terrorism is essentially strategic communication in the purest definition, message and action, utilizing the global communications environment as earned media to convey their message.⁹⁹ Currently, the successful massing of effects by coordinating message and action requires direct commander involvement. The successful massing of information effects requires precise and disciplined execution from shaping operations through exploitation. Commanders at all echelons must, at present, bridge doctrinal separation between IO and PA in order to integrate efforts in the information domain and direct coordination between the informational and physical dimension.¹⁰⁰

LTG Metz pulled together the essential elements of effective strategic communications for the initiation of the second battle of Fallujah, called Operation Al-Fajr. Through ad hoc means he raised the “the IO-Threshold,” and established what is required in a standard planning process for military strategic communications. Operation Al-Fajr is an example demonstrating the effectiveness of coordinating action between military strategic communications and military operations.

The initiation of the second battle of Fallujah, called Operation Al-Fajr sought to clear insurgents from the city. Planners did not repeat the mistakes made during Operation Vigilant Resolve and would prevent worldwide public opinion to stop the assault. The planners developed a concept called “the IO-threshold.” The purpose of the IO threshold was to enable the commander to visualize a point when enemy propaganda, aimed at international, regional, and local media outlets, degraded the friendly forces ability to conduct unrestrained combat operations. Subordinate commanders were directed to accomplish shaping operation under the IO threshold. However, during the decisive operation when the IO threshold was crossed, commanders understood they had days and hours to accomplish their objectives. The planners developed courses of action to mass effects by synchronizing messages with forthcoming action. They therefore, raised the IO threshold and created additional “maneuver” room for combat

⁹⁹ Josten, 16-20.

¹⁰⁰ Metz, 7.

operations in Fallujah. The plan included actions that deliberately countered enemy information. The planner's ability to coordinate message and actions massed effects and provided a foundation for combat operations in advance of the operation by raising the IO threshold. Operation Al-Fajr was successful because the planners articulated an achievable end-state by integrating IO, PA, Defense Support to Public Diplomacy, and Combat Camera and coordinated the message with the military actions.

U.S. forces coordinated the message with military actions to gain support from public officials while preparing the media for the realities of urban warfare. Operation Al-Fajr differed from Operation Vigilant Resolve in that the strategic communications message reinforced by premeditated action to gain widespread support among influential people and to prepare key publics for the realities of the battle plan. In addition, the commanders made effective use of combat camera and ad-hoc information engagement cells to turn pictures with credible relevant messages into pre-packaged media statements to counter opposition messages in hours not days. Despite the success, Joint forces should not continue to use ad hoc methods and organizations to coordinate military strategic communications message with military operations. Military strategic communications requires a new organizational structure and planning process.

A New Military Strategic Communications System

LTG Metz had to develop ad hoc solutions in the absence of a coherent organization and sound doctrine for military strategic communications. To remedy this situation, the US military needs a more effective planning process and an organizational structure to help commanders focus their military strategic communications efforts at the operational and tactical level. The assessment of the political campaign system showed that the political campaign system has an effective process and planning methodology. The political campaign system provides a framework with which to formulate changes to the existing military strategic communications system.

A New Organizational Structure

To improve the organizational supporting military strategic communications it is first necessary to establish information engagement cells from the strategic to the tactical level to overcome the specialization and isolation of functions that currently exists. The new organizational structure uses political campaigning organizational structure as a model and borrows from emerging doctrine.¹⁰¹ In the new organization primary communications capabilities for supporting military strategic communication are located in fusion cells called information engagement cells.

The information engagement cell is responsible for coordinating, synchronizing, orchestrating, assessing, and adapting the military strategic communications from the strategic to the tactical level. The information engagement cells use the communications capabilities already task organized from current doctrine. Thus, the information engagement cells size and composition changes from the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) level to the Regional Combatant

¹⁰¹ Army Publication FM 3.0 (DRAG) *Operations*. Chapter 7, Department of Defense: Washington, DC. 2007

Commander (RCC) level. The information engagement cells overcome the horizontal organizational issues resulting from the doctrinal separation between IO and PA and the formal separation by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs Staff (CJCS). The new organizational structure provides for effective coordination and planning by locating all the supporting capabilities in the cell.

Figure 9 shows the information engagement cells from the strategic to the tactical level. The information engagement cells have the capabilities of Psychological Operations, Combat Camera, Public Affairs, and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy. Therefore, the information engagement cells conduct military strategic communications to include the strategic, operational and tactical level.

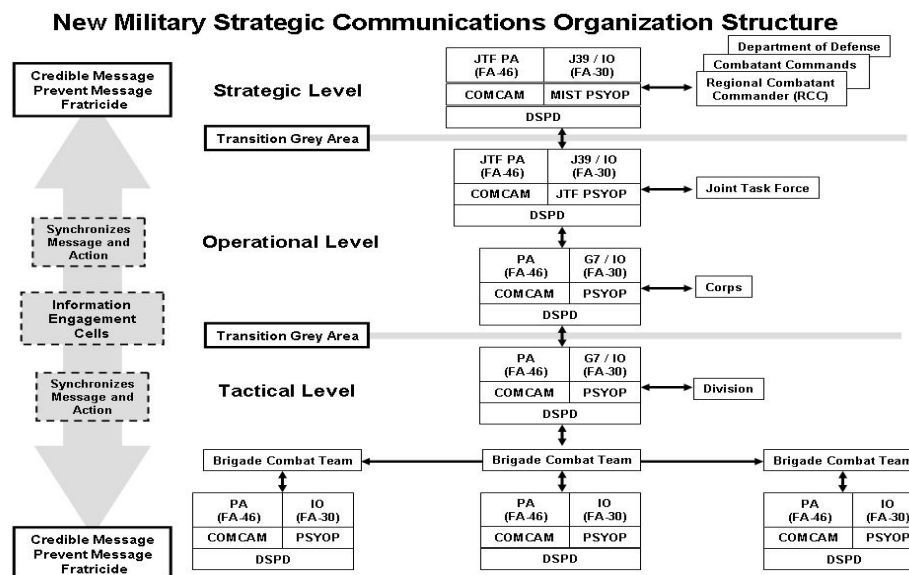


Figure 9 New Military Strategic Communications Organization Structure

The information engagement cell is a functional coordination cell to share and coordinate activities within the cognitive domain and synchronize credible messages with military operations. The staff responsibility for conducting military strategic communications is PSYOPS, IO (J39/G-7), and PA. The information cells intended effect is to inform and influence. IO and PSYOPS influence and inform, PA informs, and COMCAM informs and documents. The information engagement cells coordinating process occurs during operations planning and

synchronization meetings. However, PA and IO cannot be subordinate to one another at any time. This is to ensure the firewall maintains intact. In addition, the public affairs officer retains direct access to the commander and conducts close integration and coordination with IO.

Combat camera and the information engagement cell allow the headquarters to prepare media packets. Combat camera's importance requires highlighting. The information engagement cell informs and documents with combat camera. The information engagement cells use of COMCAM tells a story in any language because a picture is worth a thousand words. COMCAM is most important at the brigade headquarters. The brigade headquarters is where the actions are planned during military operations and locating COMCAM here provides many opportunities for action photos. Combat camera and the information engagement cell allow the information engagement cell to rapidly prepare media packets and counter enemy information campaigns. Enemy information campaigns require a quick response with credible relevant messages. The information engagement cell has the additional responsibility for monitoring global and local media within their areas of operations. This allows the information engagement cell to get ahead of a local media outlets releasing the next tactical action to have strategic consequences. Thus, information engagement cells allow a proactive information campaigns.

In conclusion, the political campaign system and emerging doctrine from FM 3.0 provides a new military strategic communications organizational structure to help commanders focus their military strategic communications efforts at the operational and tactical level. The new organizational structure places the primary communications supporting capabilities for military strategic communication in fusion cells called information engagement cells. The information engagement cells overcome the organizational specialization and doctrinal shortfalls in military strategic communications system from the strategic to the tactical level. The information engagement cell is responsible for coordinating, synchronizing, orchestrating, assessing, and adapting the military strategic communications from the strategic to the tactical level. The

information engagement cell is a functional coordination cell to share and coordinate activities within the cognitive domain and synchronize credible messages with military operations.

A New Planning Process

While the assessment of the political campaign system did not provide all the answers for the military strategic communications inadequacies, it provides a framework for a thorough and methodical planning process for military strategic communications. The political campaign district research provides the framework for human factor analysis to focus planning headquarters on the social context and cultural characteristics of the population within the commander's area of operations. Next, the political campaign's ability to target the voters provides the framework for target audience identification to establish a method to sort the population into manageable target audiences based on geography, demographics, and attitudes. In addition, political campaign's method of creating a credible relevant message provides the framework for developing a theme and messages. Furthermore, the political campaign system's ability to script action with message provides the model with which to develop a target audience contact plan to coordinate message and action.

Figure 10 shows the military process for campaign, deliberate, and crisis action planning as developed and interpolated by the researcher. The military planning processes from left to right are the following: Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) ¹⁰²; Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) ¹⁰³; the new Military STRATCOM Planning Process; Joint Operational Planning and Execution System (JOPES) ¹⁰⁴; and JOPES Crisis Action Planning. ¹⁰⁵ The figure compares the military planning processes. Similarities are shown by the color codes across the chart. Although there may be minor differences between processes, the overall the process is the same. If the user

¹⁰² MCRP 5-0

¹⁰³ FM 5-0

¹⁰⁴ JP 5-0

¹⁰⁵ JP 5-0

knows one of the military planning processes, the new military strategic communications planning process will easily fit. The military strategic communication planning process plugs into mission analysis and course of action development.

New Military Strategic Communications Planning Process

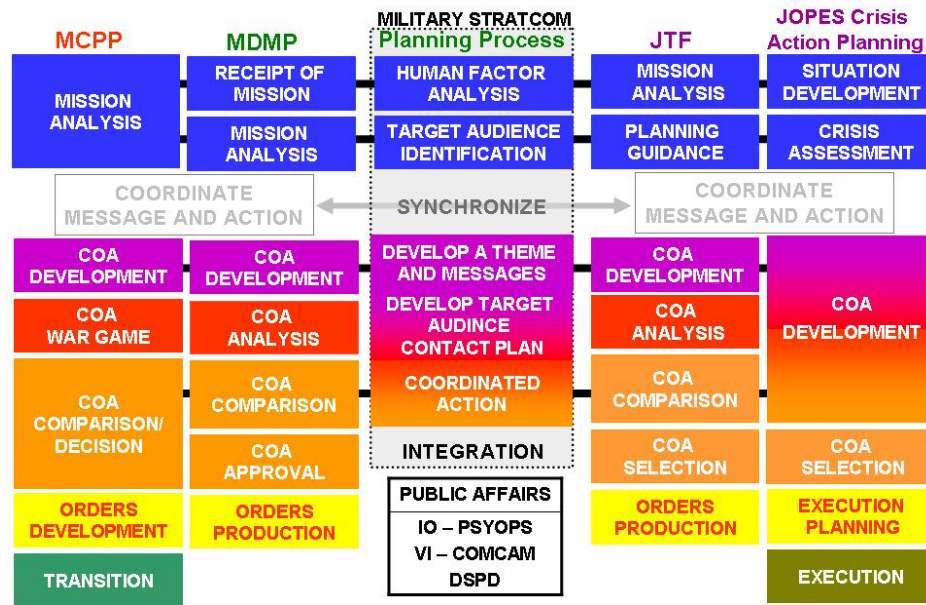


Figure 10 New Military Strategic Communications Planning Process

The information engagement cell performs human factor analysis and target audience identification during mission analysis. In addition, the information engagement cell coordinates with the JIPB process to ensure the planning headquarters has a common understanding of the human and physical dimension of the commander's battlespace. Development of a theme and messages and creation of target audience contact plan occurs during course of action development for each separate plan of action. The key target audiences may change in different courses of action, so each course of action may have a different theme, messages, and delivery method. Thus, the military strategic communication planning process ensures coordinated message and action once the course of action is approved.

Figure 11 shows military strategic communications step 1, human factor analysis interpolated from the political campaign planning and developed by the researcher. The

information engagement cell conducts human factor analysis during mission analysis. Like IO, military strategic communication support for JIPB development differs from conventional military requirements in that it may require greater lead-time and may have expanded collection, production, and dissemination requirements.¹⁰⁶ However, human factor analysis focuses on understanding the social context and cultural characteristics of the population within the commander's area of operations. The commanders understanding of the information environment allows military strategic communications to engage the localities with a variety of means in which to promulgate the message through credible information sources. Human factor analysis provides the foundation for effective military strategic communications. The next step is target audience identification.

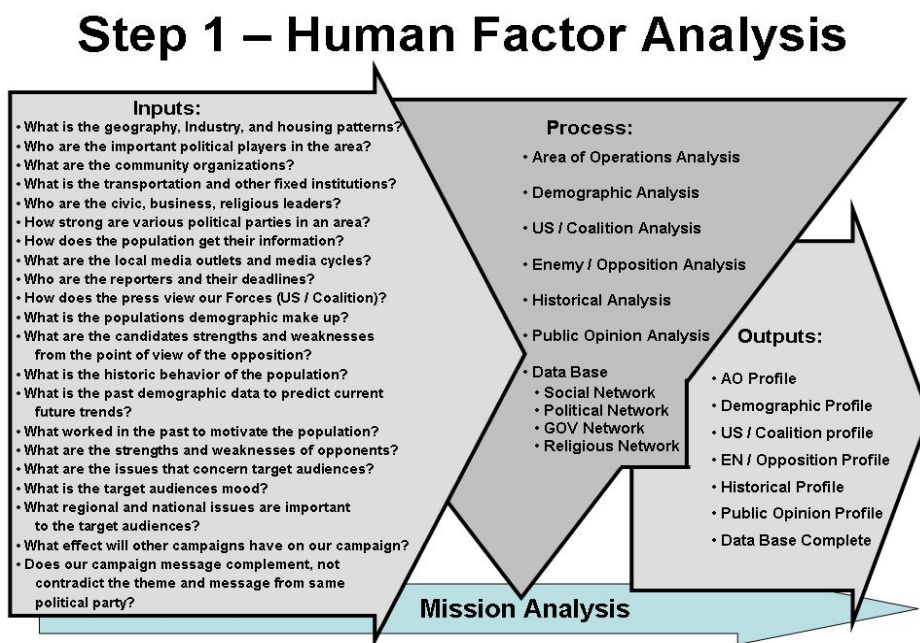


Figure 11 Human Factor Analysis

Figure 12 shows the military strategic communications process step 2, target audience identification interpolated from political campaign planning and developed by the researcher.

¹⁰⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publications, JP 3-13, Information Operations (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2006), V-1.

Military strategic communications target audience identification sorts the population into manageable groups during mission analysis. The manageable groups are refined into target audiences by geographic, demographic, characteristics, and attitudes. In addition, target audience analysis provides the means to establish what is important to the target audience. The sociological research allows military headquarters to test their hypothesis about the target audience. Thus, the military planning headquarters overlays a human terrain data depicting target audiences by location, demographics, characteristics, and attitudes. The target audience identification during mission analysis allows military strategic communication system to develop the message and coordinate the message with the proposed course of action.

Step 2 – Target Audience Identification

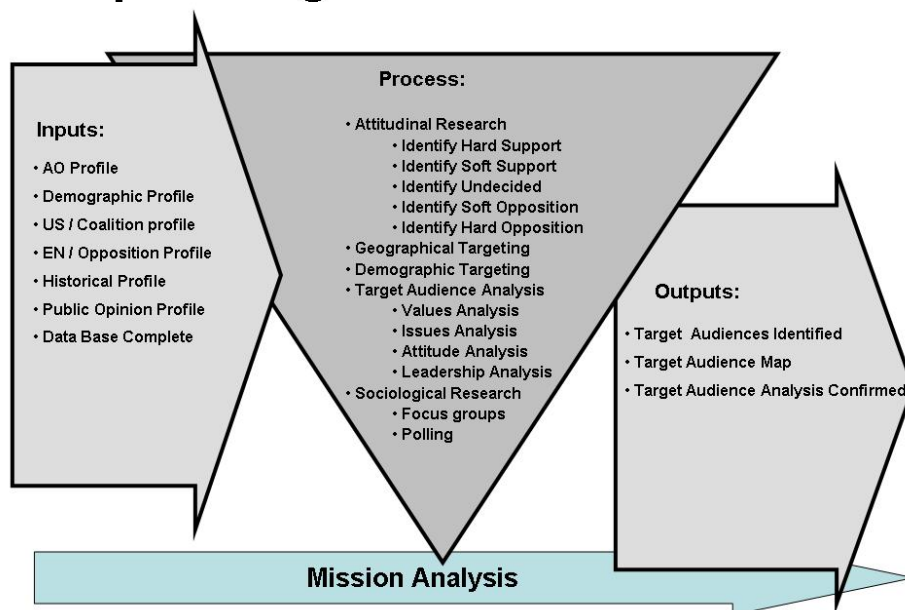


Figure 12 Target Audience Identification

Figure 13 shows military strategic communications step 3, develop a theme and messages, which were interpolated from political campaign planning and developed by the researcher. Military strategic communications systems develop a theme and messages as step 3 during course of action development. The information engagement cell uses the issue selection tool to identify what issues are important. In addition, the information cell uses the message box

to identify the strengths and weaknesses of US or coalition forces and helps planners identify contrasts while providing predictions of opposition messages. The strategic information engagement cell provides one central theme, which the operational and tactical information engagement cells can refer to ensure a credible message. Furthermore, the planning headquarters' use of sociological research tests the theme and messages for effectiveness and identifies 2nd and 3rd order unintended consequences before broadcasting a message. Thus, the information engagement cell has a method for creating credible relevant messages. Once the target audiences are selected and a credible message defined, the next step is to decide how to convey the message through coordinated action.

Step 3 – Develop a Theme and Messages

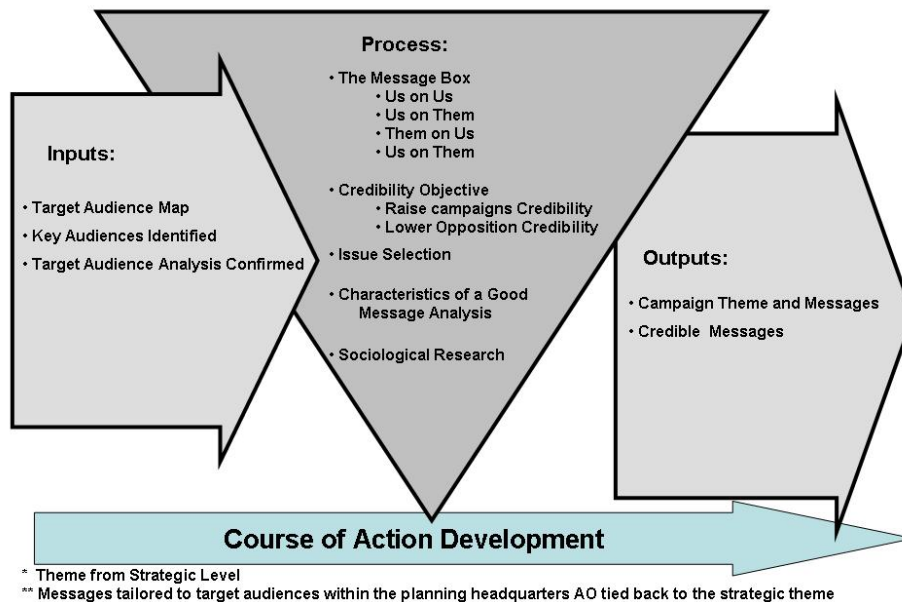


Figure 13 Develop Theme and Messages

Figure 14 shows military strategic communications step 4, develop a target audience contact plan interpolated from political campaign planning and developed by the researcher. Military strategic communications develops methods of delivery during course of action development. This is the most important step of the military strategic communications process. During course of action, military strategic communications messages are coordinated with the

actions of military operations. The timing of the release of a message and the coordinated action depends on the situation. The successful massing of information effects requires precise and disciplined execution from shaping operations through exploitation and must occur during course of action development. Therefore, commanders at all echelons will not have to bridge the doctrinal separation between IO and PA in order to integrate efforts in the information domain and direct coordination between the informational and physical dimension.¹⁰⁷

Step 4 – Develop TA Contact Plan

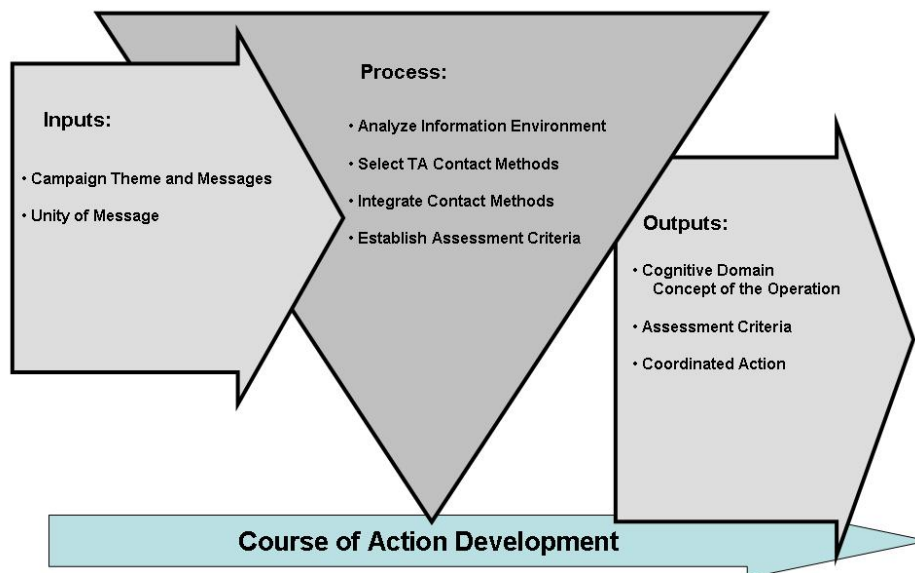


Figure 14 Develop target Audience Contact Plan

In conclusion, LTG Metz pulled it together for the initiation of the second battle of Fallujah, called Operation Al-Fajr, through ad hoc means to raise the “the IO-Threshold.” Joint forces should not continue to use ad hoc methods and organizations to coordinate military strategic communications message with military operations. The political campaign system provides a framework with which to formulate changes to the existing military strategic communications system.

¹⁰⁷ Metz, 7.

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